

March 8, 2024

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

**ALL COUNTY LETTER NO. 24-16**

This letter provides County Welfare Departments with guidance on disregarding, from income, cash grants refugees may receive from certain federal resettlement initiatives when determining eligibility for Refugee Cash Assistance.



**KIM JOHNSON**  
DIRECTOR

CALIFORNIA HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY  
**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES**  
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**GAVIN NEWSOM**  
GOVERNOR

March 8, 2024

ALL COUNTY LETTER NO. 24-16

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS  
ALL COUNTY CALWORKS PROGRAM MANAGERS  
ALL COUNTY FISCAL OFFICERS  
ALL COUNTY CONSORTIUM PROJECT MANAGERS  
ALL COUNTY REFUGEE CASH ASSISTANCE CONTACTS  
ALL COUNTY REFUGEE COORDINATORS

SUBJECT: **EXPANSION OF INCOME DISREGARDS FOR REFUGEE CASH ASSISTANCE**

REFERENCE: [OFFICE OF REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT \(ORR\) POLICY LETTER \(PL\) 23-04](#), [TITLE 45 CODE OF FEDERAL REGULATIONS \(CFR\) § 400.59\(d\)](#), [CFR 400.66\(d\)](#), [MANUAL OF POLICIES AND PROCEDURES \(MPP\) § 69-206.11](#)

This All County Letter (ACL) provides guidance to County Welfare Departments (CWDs) concerning disregarding income from cash grants that refugees<sup>1</sup> may receive from certain federal resettlement initiatives when determining eligibility for Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA).

On June 12, 2023, ORR released [Policy Letter \(PL\) 23-04](#), which expands RCA income disregards to include programs determined to be equivalent to the federal Reception and Placement (R&P) program, in addition to authorizing states to disregard cash grants received by refugees through other federal resettlement initiatives at their discretion. This guidance aims to facilitate the equitable distribution of RCA among refugees regardless of the resettlement initiative under which they are served and enable refugees to receive the maximum amount of RCA for which they are eligible.

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<sup>1</sup> In the context of this All County Letter, the term "refugees" includes those ORR-eligible populations who are refugees and additional individuals (e.g., certain Afghans who arrived through Operation Allies Welcome) who are eligible for initial resettlement services as authorized by section 412(b)(1) of the Immigration and Nationality Act. The term "refugees" here does not include asylees, Cuban/Haitian Entrants, victims of human trafficking, humanitarian parolees from Ukraine, or other ORR-eligible populations who are not eligible for initial resettlement services.

## **BACKGROUND**

Upon arrival, most refugees have no family or social safety net in the United States and need all the assistance for which they are eligible to begin rebuilding their lives. Within the first few days of resettling in their final destination, refugees typically visit local benefits offices to see if they qualify for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and if ineligible for TANF, for RCA.

Federal regulations - [45 CFR § 400.66\(d\)](#) (for publicly administered RCA programs) and [45 CFR § 400.59\(d\)](#) (for public/private RCA programs) - and state regulations ([MPP § 69-206.11](#)), mandate the disregard of cash grants that refugees receive through the R&P program, commonly referred to as the refugee resettlement program, when conducting income eligibility determinations for RCA. The regulations do not address cash grants from other federal resettlement programs that are not R&P, however.

## **RCA INCOME DISREGARDS FOR CASH GRANTS FROM A PROGRAM EQUIVALENT TO R&P**

The California Department of Social Services (CDSS), under the direction of ORR [PL 23-04](#), directs counties to disregard cash grants that refugees and other eligible individuals<sup>2</sup> receive through programs determined by ORR to be equivalent to R&P beginning as of June 12, 2023. ORR has determined that [Welcome Corps](#) and the [Afghan Placement and Assistance \(APA\)](#) program are such equivalents. As such, counties are directed to disregard cash grants received by refugees and other eligible individuals through these programs when determining eligibility for RCA.

In conducting a refugee's income eligibility determination for RCA, counties should disregard cash grants a refugee receives from R&P-equivalent programs in the same amount as they would disregard R&P cash grants. The amount of cash grant that may be disregarded is limited to the amount of cash grant the client would receive under the R&P program, to maintain equity between refugees being served under different resettlement initiatives.

Counties should continue to disregard R&P cash grants as described in [MPP § 69-206.11](#). The CDSS will advise counties if/when ORR identifies other programs as equivalent to R&P or the CDSS determines that RCA income disregards should be extended to other federal resettlement initiatives.

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<sup>2</sup> In the context of this All County Letter, the term "refugees" includes those ORR-eligible populations who are refugees and additional individuals (e.g., certain Afghans who arrived through Operation Allies Welcome) who are eligible for initial resettlement services as authorized by section 412(b)(1) of the Immigration and Nationality Act. The term "refugees" here does not include asylees, Cuban/Haitian Entrants, victims of human trafficking, humanitarian parolees from Ukraine, or other ORR-eligible populations who are not eligible for initial resettlement services.

## **ADJUSTMENT OF RCA INCOME DISREGARDS FOR CASH GRANTS**

The CDSS directs counties to disregard cash grants that a refugee receives under a program equivalent to R&P beginning as of June 12, 2023, in addition to continuing to disregard R&P cash grants.

If you have questions or need additional guidance regarding the information in this letter, please contact the Refugee Programs Bureau at (916) 654-4356 or at [RPB@dss.ca.gov](mailto:RPB@dss.ca.gov).

For more updates on Refugee Cash Assistance, Entrant Cash Assistance, and Trafficking and Crime Victims Assistance Program policy, please follow this link to the [CDSS Letters and Notices](#) page and subscribe to the Cash Aid and Food Assistance Programs email distribution list.

Sincerely,

***Original Document Signed By***

ELIANA KAIMOWITZ  
Acting Director  
Office of Equity